

LAND TRANSFER REQUESTS AND POTENTIAL UPDATES TO GUIDELINES

History

The Tahoe Public Utility District (TCPUD) has recently launched a public process, in partnership with the Tahoe Cross Country Ski Education Association, a local nonprofit that operates the Tahoe Cross Country ski area, to relocate its main lodge, which is now operated out of the aging Highlands Community Center. TCPUD is considering five new site locations, and one of its two preferred sites is on land owned by the Conservancy adjacent to North Tahoe High School.

Update

To facilitate the potential use of the Conservancy's property for the new lodge, TCPUD recently approached Conservancy staff with a proposal to transfer sensitive TCPUD-owned land adjacent to other Conservancy-owned land a few miles south in exchange for the Conservancy's parcel next to the high school and other Conservancy-owned parcels.

This potential exchange and the potential use of land acquired by the Conservancy for the new lodge raises several issues that the Board may want to consider:

1. Is the proposed new lodge an allowable and appropriate use of land purchased by the Conservancy? The proposed use is consistent with the purposes of the Lake Tahoe Acquisition Bond Act of 1982, which provided funding for the Conservancy to acquire lands to protect sensitive lands from development, provide public lakeshore access, consolidate public ownerships for more effective management, and provide public access to other public lands. In addition, the Conservancy land on the proposed site is not sensitive under TRPA's land classification system, and was acquired together with several other sensitive and non-sensitive parcels. Nevertheless, it was acquired under the Conservancy's Environmentally Sensitive Lands (ESL) Program, which sets the priorities and eligibility criteria for acquisitions under the 1982 Bond Act, and only allows for acquisitions of parcels to protect the natural environment. The ESL Program Guidelines, last updated in 2005, did not anticipate future uses of the ESL parcels that would accommodate public access and recreation.

2. Under what conditions would the Conservancy allow the use of this parcel for the new lodge? TCPUD will be preparing an environmental document to evaluate the impacts of the project on each of the potential sites under consideration.
3. Would a proposed transfer of Conservancy and TCPUD lands help meet those conditions and be consistent with the Conservancy's policy regarding land transfers? The Conservancy's Land Transfer Guidelines require, among other things, that transfers facilitate more efficient management of public lands.

Conservancy staff will provide an overview of TCPUD's proposed process and the potential issues raised for the Board to consider in responding to TCPUD.

Conservancy Staff Contacts

Aimee Rutledge
Patrick Wright

aimee.rutledge@tahoe.ca.gov
patrick.wright@tahoe.ca.gov